IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA

SHANTAE BAKER 5000 Springfield Ave. C

Philadelphia, PA 19143

CIVIL ACTION

Plaintiff,

DOCKET NO.:

v.

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA HEALTH SYSTEM

3400 Spruce St.

Philadelphia, PA 19107

JURY TRIAL DEMANDED

.

Defendant.

CIVIL ACTION COMPLAINT

Shantae Baker (hereinafter referred to as "Plaintiff," unless indicated otherwise), by and through her undersigned counsel, hereby avers as follows:

INTRODUCTION

1. This action has been initiated by Plaintiff against University of Pennsylvania Health System (hereinafter referred to as "Defendant") for violations of the Americans with Disabilities Act, as amended ("ADA" - 42 USC §§ 12101 et. seq.), the Family and Medical Leave Act ("FMLA - 29 U.S.C. §2601 et. seq.), Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, ("Title VII" - 42 U.S.C. §§ 2000d et. seq.)/the Pregnancy Discrimination Act ("PDA"), Pennsylvani8a common law, and the Pennsylvania Human Relations Act ("PHRA"). Plaintiff asserts, inter alia, that she was unlawfully terminated from Defendant. As a direct consequence of Defendant's unlawful actions, Plaintiff seeks damages as set forth herein.

¹ Plaintiff will move to amend the instant Complaint to include violations of the PHRA after full administrative exhaustion before the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission. Such claims will identically mirror Plaintiff's federal claims asserted herein under the ADA and Title VII/PDA.

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

- 2. This Court has original subject matter jurisdiction over the instant action pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §§1331 and 1343(a)(4) because it arises under laws of the United States and seeks redress for violations of civil rights under the FMLA and the ADA.
- 3. This Court may properly maintain personal jurisdiction over Defendant because Defendant's contacts with this state and this judicial district are sufficient for the exercise of jurisdiction in order to comply with traditional notions of fair play and substantial justice, satisfying the standard set forth by the United States Supreme Court in <u>International Shoe Co. v. Washington</u>, 326 U.S. 310 (1945) and its progeny.
- 4. Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §1391(b)(1) and (b)(2), venue is properly laid in this district because all of the acts and/or omissions giving rise to the claims set forth herein occurred in this judicial district.
- 5. Plaintiff filed a Charge of discrimination and retaliation with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission ("EEOC") and also dual-filed said charge with the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission ("PHRC"). Plaintiff has properly exhausted her administrative proceedings (with respect to her Title VII/PDA and ADA claims) before initiating this action by timely filing and dual-filing her Charge with the EEOC and PHRC, and by filing the instant lawsuit within 90 days of receiving a right-to-sue letter from the EEOC.

PARTIES

- 6. The foregoing paragraphs are incorporated herein in their entirety as if set forth in full.
 - 7. Plaintiff is an adult individual, with an address as set forth in the caption.

- 8. Defendant University of Pennsylvania Health System is a healthcare system with operations located throughout Pennsylvania, including but not limited to a location at 800 Spruce St., Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where Plaintiff physically worked.
- 9. At all times relevant herein, Defendant acted by and through its agents, servants and/or employees, each of whom acted at all times relevant herein in the course and scope of their employment with and for Defendant.

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

- 10. The foregoing paragraphs are incorporated herein in their entirety as if set forth in full.
 - 11. Plaintiff was employed with Defendant for approximately 10 years.
- 12. During her long tenure with Defendant, Plaintiff was a dedicated and hard-working employee.
- 13. During the last few years of Plaintiff's employment with Defendant, Plaintiff suffered from back-related health conditions and filed a worker's compensation claim related to same in or about December of 2015.
- 14. As a result of Plaintiff's aforesaid back-related disabilities, she was (at times) limited in her ability to perform some daily life activities, including but not limited to bending, twisting, working, and performing manual tasks.
- 15. Despite Plaintiff's aforementioned health conditions, she was still able to perform the duties of her job well with Defendant; however, she did occasionally require reasonable accommodations, including but not limited to time off from work to care for and treat for her health conditions, including approximately two weeks in or about December of 2015.

- 16. In or about May of 2016, Plaintiff took another medical leave of absence for the birth of her daughter and returned to work in or about July of 2016.
- 17. On or about August 24, 2016, shortly after returning from her medical leave of absence related to the birth of her daughter, Plaintiff again began to suffer from back-related health conditions, which she reported to Defendant's management as a work-related injury and filed another worker's compensation claim.
- 18. Defendant's management ordered Plaintiff to visit with a worker's compensation panel physician, to which she complied.
- 19. Plaintiff thereafter requested approximately two weeks off from work (from on or about August 24, 2016 through early September of 2016) for her aforesaid disabilities.
- 20. In or about September of 2016, Plaintiff was notified that her August, 2016 worker's compensation claim was denied and therefore, the two weeks that Plaintiff had been absent in August/September of 2016 (for her back-related disabilities) was not covered under worker's compensation.
- 21. After Plaintiff's August, 2016 worker's compensation claim was denied (as discussed further *supra*), Plaintiff was given a final written warning (in or about October of 2016) for taking off work approximately two weeks from August-September of 2016 for her aforesaid back-related disabilities. Plaintiff was informed that because such time off was not being covered by worker's compensation, Defendant needed to place her on a final written warning under Defendant's attendance policy.
- 22. Plaintiff was further told by Defendant's management, including but not limited to Mark Mykulowycz (Manager) that she could not be absent or tardy anymore or she would go over the allotted number of points under Defendant's attendance policy and be terminated.

- 23. On or about November 26, 2016, Plaintiff was terminated for taking a day off because her daughter was sick.
- 24. Defendant considered Plaintiff's aforesaid final written warning (and therefore counted disability-related absences against her) in making the decision to terminate her employment.
- 25. Furthermore, had Plaintiff not been given a final written warning for taking two weeks off as a result of her aforesaid health conditions (which should have been considered a reasonable accommodation under the ADA), Plaintiff would not have been terminated from Defendant in November of 2016.
- 26. Plaintiff believes and therefore avers that she was issued illegal discipline and ultimately terminated because of her actual/perceived/record of disabilities, in retaliation for requesting accommodations (including FMLA-qualifying leave), and/or as a direct result of Defendant's failure to accommodate Plaintiff's disabilities (by counting protected absences against her in making the decision to discipline her and ultimately terminate her).

First Cause of Action <u>Violations of the Americans with Disabilities Act, as Amended ("ADAAA")</u> ([1] Actual/Perceived/Record of Disability Discrimination; [2] Retaliation; [3] Failure to Accommodate)

- 27. The foregoing paragraphs are incorporated herein in their entirety as if set forth in full.
- 28. Plaintiff suffered from qualifying health conditions under the ADA (as amended) which affected her ability (at times) to perform some daily life activities, as described *supra*.
- 29. Plaintiff requested reasonable accommodations from Defendant, including but not limited to time off from work to care for and treat for her health conditions.

- 30. Defendant failed to engage in any interactive process and refused to accommodate Plaintiff by counting occurrences against her for days that she needed to miss work because of her aforesaid health conditions.
- 31. Plaintiff believes and therefore avers that Defendant discriminated against Plaintiff by issuing her pretextual discipline and ultimately terminating her employment because of: (1) her known and/or perceived health problems; (2) her record of impairment; (3) her requested accommodations (which constitutes unlawful retaliation); and/or (4) Defendant's failure to accommodate her disabilities.
 - 32. These actions as aforesaid constitute violations of the ADAAA.

Second Cause of Action Violations of Title VII/PDA (Wrongful Termination - Gender/Pregnancy Discrimination/Retaliation)

- 33. The foregoing paragraphs are incorporated herein in their entirety as if set forth in full.
- 34. Plaintiff was issued pretextual discipline and terminated from her employment with Defendant shortly after returning from maternity leave for the birth of her daughter.
- 35. Plaintiff believes and therefore avers that she was issued pretextual discipline and ultimately terminated because of her pregnancy.
- 36. Upon information and belief, these aforesaid actions, taken because of her pregnancy, constitute violations of Title VII/PDA.

Third Cause of Action <u>Violations of the Family and Medical Leave Act ("FMLA")</u> (Interference and Retaliation)

37. The foregoing paragraphs are incorporated herein in their entirety as if set forth in full.

- 38. Plaintiff was an eligible employee under the definitional terms of the FMLA, 29 U.S.C. § 2611(a)(i)(ii).
- 39. Plaintiff requested leave from Defendant for the birth of her child and for her own serious health conditions.
- 40. Plaintiff was employed with Defendant for at least twelve months prior to her request for FMLA-qualifying leave pursuant to the requirements of 29 U.S.C.A § 2611(2)(i).
- 41. Plaintiff had at least 1,250 hours of service with the Defendant during her last full year of employment.
- 42. Defendant is engaged in an industry affecting commerce and employs fifty (50) or more employees for each working day during each of the twenty (20) or more calendar work weeks in the current or proceeding calendar year, pursuant to 29 U.S.C.A § 2611(4)(A)(i).
- 43. Plaintiff was entitled to receive leave pursuant to 29 U.S.C.A § 2612 (a)(1) for a total of twelve (12) work weeks of leave on a block or intermittent basis.
- 44. Defendant committed interference and retaliation violations of the FMLA by: (1) disciplining and terminating Plaintiff for requesting and/or exercising her FMLA rights and/or for taking FMLA-qualifying leave; (2) by considering Plaintiff's FMLA leave needs in making the decision to issue her discipline and/or terminate her; and (3) disciplining and/or terminating Plaintiff to prevent her from taking further FMLA-qualifying leave in the future.
- 45. It is also believed and therefore averred that Plaintiff still had FMLA leave available to her for the two weeks that she took off in or about August/September of 2016; however, Defendant never properly informed Plaintiff of her individualized FMLA rights as it pertained to her aforesaid two-week medical leave; thus, Defendants failed to follow proper

notice, designation, and informational regulations of the FMLA, which resulted in Plaintiff being disciplined and later terminated.

46. These actions as aforesaid constitute violations of the FMLA.

Fourth Cause of Action Common-Law Wrongful Discharge (Public Policy Violation)

- 47. The foregoing paragraphs are incorporated herein in their entirety as if set forth in full.
- 48. Upon information and belief, Plaintiff was terminated in substantial part for making a claim for workers' compensation benefits and/or seeking worker's compensation benefits and/or for her work-related injuries (as discussed *supra*).
- 49. It is against Pennsylvania's public policy for an employee to be terminated for making a worker's compensation claim and/or seeking workers' compensation benefits. These actions as aforesaid constitute wrongful termination in Pennsylvania. *See Shick v. Shirey*, 552 Pa. 590, 716 A.2d 1231 (1997); *Rothrock v. Rothrock Motor Sales, Inc.*, 584 Pa. 297, 883 A.2d 511, 516 (2005).
- 50. The mere temporal proximity between Plaintiff's claim for worker's compensation and her termination creates an inference that her termination was in retaliation for making such a claim.
 - 51. These actions as aforesaid constitute wrongful termination in Pennsylvania.

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff prays that this Court enter an Order providing that:

A. Defendant is to be prohibited from continuing to maintain its illegal policy, practice or custom of discriminating/retaliating against employees and are to be ordered to promulgate an effective policy against such unlawful acts and to adhere thereto;

- B. Defendant is to compensate Plaintiff, reimburse Plaintiff and make Plaintiff whole for any and all pay and benefits Plaintiff would have received had it not been for Defendant's illegal actions, including but not limited to past lost earnings, future lost earnings, salary, pay increases, bonuses, medical and other benefits, training, promotions, pension, and seniority. Plaintiff should be accorded those benefits illegally withheld from the date she first suffered retaliation/discrimination/interference at the hands of Defendant until the date of verdict;
- C. Plaintiff is to be awarded liquidated and/or punitive damages, as permitted by applicable law(s) alleged asserted herein, in an amount believed by the Court or trier of fact to be appropriate to punish Defendant for its willful, deliberate, malicious and outrageous conduct and to deter Defendant or other employers from engaging in such misconduct in the future;
- D. Plaintiff is to be accorded any and all other equitable and legal relief as the Court deems just, proper and appropriate including for emotional distress;
- E. Plaintiff is to be awarded the costs and expenses of this action and reasonable legal fees as provided by applicable federal and state law;
- F. Any verdict in favor of Plaintiff is to be molded by the Court to maximize the financial recovery available to Plaintiff in light of the caps on certain damages set forth in applicable federal law; and
- G. Plaintiff's claims are to receive a trial by jury to the extent allowed by applicable law. Plaintiff has also endorsed this demand on the caption of this Complaint in accordance with Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 38(b).

Respectfully submitted,

KARPF & CERUTTI, P.C.

By:

Ari R. Karpf, Esq. 3331 Street Road Two Greenwood Square Building 2, Ste. 128 Bensalem, PA 19020 (215) 639-0801

Dated: December 11, 2017

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA

CASE MANAGEMENT TRACK DESIGNATION FORM

SHANTAE BAKER	CIVIL ACTION					
v.						
UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA HEALTH SYSTEM:	NO.					
In accordance with the Civil Justice Expense and plaintiff shall complete a Case Management Trace filing the complaint and serve a copy on all defends side of this form.) In the event that a defendant designation, that defendant shall, with its first and the plaintiff and all other parties, a Case Manager to which that defendant believes the case should be a ca	k Designation Form in all civil cases at the tin ants. (See § 1:03 of the plan set forth on the rev it does not agree with the plaintiff regarding pearance, submit to the clerk of court and serv ment Track Designation Form specifying the	ne of verse said				
SELECT ONE OF THE FOLLOWING CASE	MANAGEMENT TRACKS:					
(a) Habeas Corpus - Cases brought under 28 U.S.	S.C. § 2241 through § 2255.	()				
(b) Social Security - Cases requesting review of and Human Services denying plaintiff Social	a decision of the Secretary of Health Security Benefits.	()				
(c) Arbitration - Cases required to be designated	for arbitration under Local Civil Rule 53.2.	()				
(d) Asbestos – Cases involving claims for personal injury or property damage from exposure to asbestos.						
(e) Special Management – Cases that do not fall commonly referred to as complex and that ne the court. (See reverse side of this form for a management cases.)	ed special or intense management by	()				
(f) Standard Management - Cases that do not fall	l into any one of the other tracks.	(X)				

Attorney-at-law

FAX Number

(215) 639-4970

Plaintiff

Attorney for

akarpf@karpf-law.com

E-Mail Address

(Clv. 660) 10/02

Telephone

Date

12/11/2017

(215) 639-0801

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

The state of the s

FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA — DRSIGNATION FORM to be assignment to appropriate calendar,	e used by counsel to indicate the category of the case for the purpose of			
Address of Plaintiff: 5000 Springfield Avenue, C, Philadelphia, PA 19	143			
Address of Defendent: 3400 Spruce Street, Philadelphia, PA 19107				
Place of Accident, Incident or Transaction: Defendant's place of business (Use Reverse Side For A	dditional Space)			
Does this civil action involve a nongovernmental corporate party with any parent corporation a	nd any publicly held corporation owning 10% or more of its stock?			
(Attach two copies of the Disclosure Statement Form in accordance with Fed.R.Civ.P. 7.1(a)				
Does this case involve multidistrict lingation possibilities?	Yes¤ No.			
RELATED CASE, IF ANY: Cuse Number: Judge	Date Terminated:			
Civil cases are deemed related when yes is answered to any of the following questions:	•			
1. Is this case related to property included in an earlier numbered suit pending or within one ye				
	Yes□ No□			
Does this case involve the same issue of fact or grow out of the same transaction as a prior s action in this court?	uit pending or within one year previously terminated			
	Yes No			
3. Does this case involve the validity or infringement of a patent already in suit or any earlier n				
terminated action in this court?	Yes□ No□ .			
4. Is this case a second or successive habeas corpus, social security appeal, or pro se civil right	s case filed by the same individual?			
	Yes D No D			
CIVIL: (Place in ONE CATEGORY ONLY)	19 - Physicala, Brita Huthur Panaga			
A. Federal Question Cases:	B. Diversity Jurisdiction Cases: 1. D Insurance Contract and Other Contracts			
1. D Indemnity Contract, Marine Contract, and All Other Contracts				
2. D FELA	2. D Airplane Personal Injury			
3. D Jones Act-Personal Injury	3. Assault, Defamation			
4. Antitrust	4. D Marine Personal Injury			
5. O Patent	5. D Motor Vehicle Personal Injury			
6. D Labor-Management Relations 6. D Other Personal Injury (Please specify)				
7. N Civil Rights	7. Products Liability			
8. □ Habeas Corpus 8. □ Products Liability — Asbestos				
9. C Securities Act(s) Cases	9. a All other Diversity Cases			
10. □ Social Security Review Cases	(Picase specify)			
11. D All other Federal Question Cases				
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ARBITRATION CERT				
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N Pursuant to Local Civil Rule 53.2, Section 3(c)(2), that to the best of my knowledge and	belief, the damages recoverable in this civil action care exceed the sum of			
\$150,000.00 exclusive of interest and costs;				
Relief other than monetary damages is sought.				
DATE: 12/11/2017	ARK2484			
Attomoy-at-Law	Attorney I.D.# 91538			
NOTE: A trial do nove will be a trial by jury only if the	re has been compliance with P.K.C.P. 18.			
I certify that, to my knowledge, the within case is not refined to any case now pending or	within one year previously terminated action in this court			
except as noted above.				
DATE: 12/11/2017	ARK2484			
DATE: 12/11/2017 Attornoy-at-Law	Atterney 1.D.# 91538			
CIV. 609 (5/2012)	7,550			

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CIVIL COVER SHEET

The JS 44 civil cover sheet and the information contained herein neither replace nor supplement the filing and service of pleadings or other papers as required by law, except as provided by local rules of court. This form, approved by the Judicial Conference of the United States in September 1974, is required for the use of the Clerk of Court for the purpose of initiating the civil docket sheet. (SEE INSTRUCTIONS ON NEXT PAGE OF THIS FORM.)

I. (a) PLAINTIFFS	ound sheet. [BEL MOTION.	NORS ON THE LET 1 NOTE OF		ENDANTS		
BAKER, SHANTAE			UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA HEALTH SYSTEM			
(b) County of Residence of First Listed Plaintiff Philadelphia (EXCEPTINUS. PLAINTIFF CASES)			County of Residence of First Listed Defendant Philadelphia (IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES ONLY) NOTE: IN LAND CONDEMNATION CASES, USE THE LOCATION OF THE TRACT OF LAND INVOLVED.			
(c) Attorneys (Firm Name, Karpf, Karpf & Cerutti, Suite 128, Bensalem, PA	P.C.; 3331 Street Road	i, Two Greenwood	Square,	cys (If Known)		
II. BASIS OF JURISDI	ICTION (Place an "X" in O	ne Box Only)	<u> </u>	HIP OF PF	RINCIPAL PARTIES	(Place an "X" in One Box for Plaintif
1 U.S. Government X 3 Federal Question Paintiff (U.S. Government Not a Party)		(For Diversity Cases Only) and One Bax for Defendant) PTF DEF Citizen of This State 1 1 Incorporated or Principal Place 4 4 of Business In This State				
2 U.S. Government Defendant	4 Diversity (Indicate Citizenshi	ip of Parties in Hem III)	Citizen of Another	State 2		Principal Place 5 5 n Another State
			Citizen or Subject Foreign Country		3 Foreign Nation	6 6
IV. NATURE OF SUIT						of Suit Code Descriptions.
CONTRACT	10	RTS	FORFEITURE		BANKRUPTCY	OTHERSTATUTES
110 Insurance 120 Marine 130 Miller Act 140 Negotiable Instrument 150 Recovery of Overpayment & Enforcement of Judgment 151 Medicare Act 152 Recovery of Defaulted Student Loans (Excludes Veterans) 153 Recovery of Overpayment of Veteran's Benefits 160 Stockholders' Suits 190 Other Contract 195 Contract Product Liability 196 Franchise REAL PROPERTY 210 Land Condemnation 220 Foreclosure 230 Rent Lease & Ejectment 240 Torts to Land 245 Tort Product Liability 290 All Other Real Property	PERSONAL INJURY 310 Airplane 315 Airplane Product Liability 320 Assault, Libel &	PERSONAL INJURY 365 Personal Injury - Product Liability 367 Health Care/ Pharmaceutical Personal Injury Product Liability 368 Asbestos Personal Injury Product Liability PERSONAL PROPER: 370 Other Fraud 371 Truth in Lending 380 Other Personal Property Damage Product Liability PERSONAL PROPER: 385 Property Damage Product Liability PRISONER PETITION Halbeas Corpus: 463 Alien Detainee 510 Motions to Vacate Sentence 530 General 535 Death Penalty Other: 540 Mandamus & Other 550 Civil Rights 555 Prison Condition 560 Civil Detainee -	5 625 Drug Relation of Property 5 690 Other 7 10 Fair Labor Act 7 720 Labor/Man- Relations 7 740 Railway Le 7 751 Family and 1 Leave Act 5 790 Other Labo 7 790 Other Labo 1 791 Employee Income Sec	OR Standards agement abor Act Medical ar Litigation Retirement amity Act	* 422 Appeal 28 USC 158 * 423 Withdrawal	3 430 Banks and Banking 4 450 Commerce 460 Deportation 470 Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations 480 Consumer Credit 490 Cable/Sat TV 850 Securities/Commodities/ Exchange 3 890 Other Statutory Actions 891 Agricultural Acts 893 Environmental Matters 895 Freedom of Information
		Conditions of Confinement Remanded from Appellate Court	4 Reinstated or Reopened	Another	rred from 0 6 Multidis r District Litigation	on - Litigation -
VI. CAUSE OF ACTIO	ON ADA 42USC1210 Brief description of ca Violations of the	utute under which you are 01; FMLA 29USC2 use: ADA, FMLA, Title	601; Title VII 4	2USC2000	tes unless diversity).	mon law and the PHRA.
VII. REQUESTED IN COMPLAINT:	UNDER RULE 2	IS A CLASS ACTION 3, F.R.Cv.P.	DEMAND S		CHECK YES on JURY DEMAN	ly if demanded in complaint: D: X Yes 'No
VIII. RELATED CAS	E(S) (See instructions):	JUDGE			DOCKET NUMBER _	
DATE 12/11/2017	······································	SIGNATURE OF AT	ORNE FOF RECORD			
FOR OFFICE USE ONLY	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·					
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